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SPEECH

OF

HON. LEWIS CASS, OF MICHIGAN,

ON

THE OREGON QUESTION.

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, MONDAY, MARCH 30, 1846.

The Joint Resolution for giving the notice to terminate the convention between the United States and Great Britain, relative to the Oregon territory, being under consideration—

Mr. CASS addressed the Senate as follows:

Mr. PRESIDENT: I do not rise at this late period to enter into any formal consideration of the principal topic involved in the proposition now pending before the Senate. I cannot flatter myself, that any such effort of mine would be successful, or would deserve to be so. I have listened attentively to the progress of this discussion, and while I acknowledge my gratification at much I have heard, still sentiments have been advanced, and views presented, in which I do not concur, and from which, even at the hazard of trespassing upon the indulgence of the Senate, I must express my dissent, and briefly the reasons of it. But, sir, I have not the remotest intention of touching the question of the title of Oregon. The tribute I bring to that subject is the tribute of conviction, not of discussion; a concurrence in the views of others, not the presentation of my own. The whole matter has been placed in bold relief before the country and the world by men far more competent, than I am to do it justice, and justice they have done it. The distinguished Senator from South Carolina, who filled, a short time since, the office of Secretary of State, has left the impress of his talents and intelligence upon his correspondence with the British Minister, and he left to an able successor to finish well a task, which was well begun. And upon this floor, the Senator from New York instructed us, while he gratified us, by a masterly vindication of the American title; and he was followed by his colleague, and by the Senator from Illinois, and by others, too, who have done honor to themselves, while doing good service to their country.

Before, however, I proceed further in my remarks, there is one subject, to which I will make a passing allusion. As to correcting the misrepresentations of the day, whether these are voluntary or involuntary, he that seeks to do it, only prepares for himself an abundant harvest of disappointment, and, I may add, of vexation. I seek no such impracticable object. In times like the present, when interests are threatened, passions excited, parties animated, and when momentous questions present themselves for solution, and the public mind is alive to the slightest sensation, we must expect, that those, upon whose action depends the welfare, if not the destiny, of the country, will be arraigned, and assailed, and condemned. I presume we are all prepared for this. We have all lived long enough to know, that this is the tax, which our position pays to its elevation. We have frequently been reminded, during the progress of this debate, of the responsibility, which men of extreme opinions, as some of us have been called, must encounter, and have been summoned to meet it—to meet the consequences of the measures we invoke.

During the course of a public life, now verging towards forty years, I have been placed in many a condition of responsibility; and often, too, where I had few to aid me, and none to consult. I have found myself able to march up to my duty, and no responsibility, in cities or in forests, has been cast upon me, which I have not readily met.

As it is with me, so it is, I doubt not, with my political friends, who regard this whole matter as I do, and who are ready to follow it to its final issue, whatever or wherever that may be. I submit to honorable Senators on the other side of the Chamber, whether these adjurations are in good taste; whether it is not fair to presume, that we have looked around us, examined what in our judgment we ought to do, and then determined to do it, come what may? This great controversy with England cannot be adjusted without a deep and solemn responsibility being cast upon all of us. If there is a responsibility in going forward, there is a responsibility in standing still. Peace has it dangers as well as war. They are not indeed of the same kind, but they may be more lasting, more dishonorable, and more destructive of the best interests of the country; because destructive of those hopes and sentiments, which elevate the moral above the material world. Let us, then, leave to each member of this body the course that duty points out to him, together with the responsibility he must meet, whether arraigned at the tribunal of his conscience, his constituents, or his country.

I observe, that as well myself, as other Senators, upon this side of the Senate have been accused of dealing in *rant and abuse*—that I believe is the term—

in the remarks we have submitted, from time to time, upon the subject, as it came up incidentally or directly for consideration. This *rant* and *abuse*, of course, had reference to remarks upon the conduct and pretensions of England.

I should not have adverted to this topic, had it not been that the honorable Senator from North Carolina, [Mr. HAYWOOD,] not now in his place, has given color to the charge, by the expression of his "mortification in being obliged to concede 'to the debates in the British Parliament a decided 'superiority over ourselves in their dignity and 'moderation."

He expressed the hope that "we might get the 'news by the next packet of an outrageous debate 'in the British Parliament." "At least sufficient 'to put them even with us on that score."

Now, Mr. President, it is not necessary to wait for the next packet for specimens of the courtesies of British parliamentary eloquence.

I hold one in my hands, which has been here some time, and which, from the circumstances, and from the station of the speaker, I at least may be permitted to refer to, when I find myself, among others, charged with participating in an outrageous debate, and when patriotism would seem to demand an unbecoming exhibition in the British Parliament, in order to restore, not our dignity, but our self-complacency.

Now, sir, I am a firm believer in the courtesies of life, public and private; and I desire never to depart from them. In all I have said, I have not uttered a word, which ought to give offence, even to political fastidiousness. I have spoken, to be sure, plainly, as became a man dealing in great truths, involving the character and interests of his country, but becomingly. I have not, indeed, called ambition moderation; nor cupidity, philanthropy; nor arrogance, humility. Let him do so, who believes them such. But I have heard the desire of the West, that the sacred rights of their country should be enforced and defended, called *western avidity*, in the Senate of the United States! I have not even imitated Lord John Russell, and talked of blustering. Still less have I imitated a greater than Lord John Russell in talents, and one higher in station, though far lower in those qualities, that conciliate respect and esteem, and preserve them.

He who seeks to know the appetite of the British public for abuse, and how greedily it is catered for, has but to consult the daily columns of the British journals; but let him, who has persuaded himself that all is decorum in the British Parliament, and that these legislative halls are but bear-gardens compared with it, turn to the speeches sometimes delivered there. Let him turn to a speech delivered by the second man in the realm, by the late Lord Chancellor of England, the Thersites indeed of his day and country, but with high intellectual powers, and a vast stock of information, and who no doubt understands the taste of his countrymen, and knows how to gratify it.

I have no pleasure in these exhibitions, which lessen the dignity of human nature; but we must look to the dark as well as to the bright side of life, if we desire to bring our opinions to the standard of experience. In a debate in the British House of Lords, on the 7th of April, 1843, I had the honor to be the subject of the vituperation of Lord Brougham; and an honor I shall esteem it, under the circumstances, as long as the honors of this world have any interest for me. I shall make no other allusion to the matter but what is necessary to the object I have in view, to exhibit the style of debate there, so much lauded here, and held up to our countrymen as the *beau ideal* of all that is courteous and dignified in political life. "There was one man," said the ex-chancellor, "who was the very impersonation of mob-hostil-'ity to England. He wished to name him, that the 'name might be clear as the guilt was undivided. 'He meant General Cass, whose breach of duty 'to his own Government was so discreditable, and 'even more flagrant than his breach of duty to hu-'manity as a man, and as the free descendent of free 'English parents, and whose conduct in all those 'particulars it was impossible to pass over or pal-'liate. This person, who had been sent to maintain 'peace, and to reside at Paris for that purpose, after 'pacific relations had been established between 'France and America, did his best to break it, 'whether by the circulation of statements upon the 'question of international law, of which he had no 'more conception than of the languages that were 'spoken in the moon, [loud laughter,"] (this sarcasm provoked their grave lordships to merriment,) "or by any other arguments of reason, for 'which he had no more capacity, than he had for 'understanding legal points and differences." "For 'that purpose he was not above pandering to the 'worst mob feeling of the United States"—"*a law-'less set of rabble politicians of inferior caste and 'station*"—"*a grovelling, groundling set of politi-'cians*"—"*a set of mere rabble, as contradistinguish-'ed from persons of property, or respectability, and of 'information*"—"*groundlings in station*," &c.

And I am thus characterized by this *modest* and *moderate* English lord, because I did what little was in my power to defeat one of the most flagitious attempts of modern times to establish a dominion over the seas, and which, under the pretext of abolishing the slave trade, and by virtue of a quintuple treaty, would have placed the flag, and ships, and seamen of our country, at the disposal of England.

Lord Brougham did not always talk thus—not when one of his friends applied to me in Paris to remove certain unfavorable impressions made in a *high quarter* by one of those imprudent and impulsive remarks, which seem to belong to his moral habits. The effort was successful.———And now my account of good for evil with Lord Brougham is balanced.

It is an irksome task to call expressions like these, and repeat them here. I hold them up not as a warning—that is not needed—but to repel the intimation, that we ought to study the courtesies of our position in the British Parliament.

When I came here, sir, I felt it due to myself to arraign no one's motives, but to yield the same credit for integrity of action to others, which I claimed for myself. The respect I owed to those who sent me here, and to those to whom I was sent, equally dictated this course. If some of us, as has been intimated, are small men, who have attained high places, if we have no other claim to this false distinction, I hope we shall at least establish that claim, which belongs to decorum of language and conduct, to life and conversation.

We all occupy positions here high enough, and useful enough, if usefully filled, to satisfy the measure of any man's ambition. It ought to be our pride and our effort to identify ourselves with this representative body of the sovereignties of the States. With this great depository of so much of the power of the American people in the three great departments of their Government, executive, legislative, and judicial—to establish an *esprit du corps*, which, while it shall leave us free to fulfil our duties, whether to our country or to our party, shall yet unite us in a determination to discard everything, which can diminish the influence, or lessen the dignity, of the Senate of the United States. While I have the honor of a seat here, I will do nothing to counteract these views. I will bandy words of reproach with no one. And the same measure of courtesy I am prepared to mete to others, I trust will be meted by others to me. At any rate, if they are not, I will have no contention in this chamber.

I have regretted many expressions which have been heard during the progress of this discussion. *Faction, demagogues, ultra patriots, ambitious leaders, inflammatory appeals, invective, little men seeking to be great ones*, and other terms and epithets, not pleasant to hear, and still less pleasant to repeat. Now, sir, nothing is easier than a bitter retort; and he who impugns the motives of others, cannot complain, if he is accused of measuring them by his own standard, and seeking, in his own breast, their rule of action. If one portion of the Senate is accused of being *ultra* on the side of their country's pretensions, how easy to retort the charge by accusing the accusers of being *ultra* on the other? But what is gained by this war of words? Nothing. On the contrary, we lower our dignity as Senators, and our characters as men. For myself, I repudiate it all. I will have no part nor lot in it. I question the motives of no honorable Senator. I believe we have all one common object—the honor and interest of our country. We differ as to the best means of action, and that difference is one of the tributes due to human fallibility. But there is no exclusive patriotism, on one side or other of this body; and I hope there will be no exclusive claim to it.

Some days since, in an incidental discussion, which sprung up, I remarked that I could not perceive why the parallel of 49° was assumed as the boundary of our claim. Why any man planted his foot on that suppositious line upon the face of the globe, and erecting a barrier there, said all to the north belongs to England, and all to the south to the United States. My remark was merely the expression of my views, without touching the reasons on which they were founded. The honorable Senators from Maine, and Maryland, and Georgia, have since called in question the accuracy of this opinion, and have entered somewhat at length into the considerations, which prove that line the true line of demarcation between the two countries. And the Senator from North Carolina [Mr. HAYWOOD] lays much stress upon this matter, making it in fact the foundation of a large portion of his argument. That parallel is, in his view, the wall of separation between our questionable and our unquestionable claims. To the south he would not yield; to the north he would, though he thinks that even there our title is the best. There is an erroneous impression upon this subject somewhere, either with the *ultra*, or (if I may coin a word) the *un-ultra* advocates of Oregon; and as this line seems to be a boundary, beyond which we may look, indeed, and wish, but must not go, it is worth while to examine summarily what are its real pretensions to the character thus assumed for it, of being the line of contact and of separation between two great nations.

There is no need of discussing the right of civilized nations to appropriate to themselves countries, newly discovered and inhabited by barbarous tribes. The principle and the practice have been sanctioned by centuries of experience. What constitutes this right of appropriation, so as to exclude other nations from its exercise in a given case, is a question, which has been differently settled in different ages of the world. At one time it was the Pope's bull which conferred the title; at another it was discovery only; then settlement under some circumstances, and under others discovery; and then settlement and discovery combined. There has been neither a uniform rule, nor a uniform practice. But under any circumstances, it is not easy to see why a certain parallel of latitude is declared to be the boundary of our claim. If the valley of a river were assumed, a principle might be also assumed, which would shut us up in it. This would be a natural and a tangible boundary. How, indeed, England could look to her own practice and acquisitions, and say to us, you are stopped by this hill, or by that valley, or by that river, I know not. England, whose colonial charters extended from the Atlantic to the South sea, as the Pacific ocean was then called, and who actually ejected the French from the country between the mountains and the Mississippi, where they had first established themselves, upon the very ground that their own rights of discovery, as shown by these charters, ran indefinitely west; and who now holds the continent of Australia—a region larger than Europe—by virtue of the right of discovery; or, in other words, because Captain Cook sailed along a portion of its coast, and occasionally hoisted a pole, or buried a bottle. I am well aware there must be limits to this conventional title, by which new countries are claimed; nor will it be always easy to assign them in fact, as they cannot be assigned in principle. We claim the Oregon territory. The grounds of this claim are before the world. The country it covers extends from California to the Russian possessions, and from the Rocky mountains to the Pacific ocean,—a homogeneous country, unclaimed by England, when our title commenced, similar in its character, its productions, its climate, its interests, and its wants, in all that constitutes natural identity, and by these elements of union, calculated forever to be united together,—no more to be divided by the parallel of 49°, than by the parallel of 43°, nor by any of the geographical circles marked upon artificial globes. No more to be so divided, than any of the possessions of England, s ttered over the world. In thus claiming the whole of this unappropriated country, unappropriated when our title attached to it, the valley of the Columbia, the valley of Frazer's river, and all the other hills and valleys which diversify its surface, we but follow the example set us by the nations of the other hemisphere, and hold on to the possession of a

country, which is one, and ought to be indivisible.

It is contended that this parallel of 49° is the northern boundary of our just claim, because for many years it was assumed as such by our Government, and that we are bound by its early course in this controversy; that the treaty of Utrecht, in 1713, between France and England, provided for the appointment of commissioners, to establish a line of division between their respective colonies upon the continent of North America, and that this parallel of 49° was thus established. The honorable Senator from Georgia, in his remarks a few days since, if he did not abandon this pretension, still abandoned all reference to it, in the support of his position. He contended, that the parallel of 49° was our boundary, but for other reasons. In the view I am now taking, sir, my principal object, as will be seen, is to show, that we are at full liberty to assert our claim to the country north of 49°, unembarrassed by the early action of our own Government, by showing that the Government was led into error respecting its rights by an historical statement, probably inaccurate in itself, certainly inaccurate, if applied to Oregon, but then supposed to be true in both respects. Now, what was this error? It was the assertion I have just mentioned, that agreeably to the treaty of Utrecht, the parallel of 49° was established as a boundary, and having been continued west, had become the northern limit of Oregon—at least of our Oregon. Upon this ground, and upon this ground alone, rested the actions and the pretensions of our Government in this matter. So far, then, as any question of national faith or justice is involved in this subject, we must test the proceedings of the Government by its own views, not by other considerations presented here at this day. The Government of the United States gave to that of Great Britain their claim, and their reasons for it. That claim first stopped at 49°, while the treaty of Utrecht was supposed to affect it, as part of Louisiana, and before we had acquired another title by the acquisition of Florida. Since then, it has been ascertained that that treaty never extended to Oregon; and we have strengthened and perfected our claim by another purchase. It is for these reasons, that I confine myself to what has passed between the two Governments, with a view to ascertain our present obligations, and omit the considerations presented by the honorable Senator from Georgia. I will barely remark, however, that in the far most important fact to which he refers, as affecting the extent of our claim—to wit: the latitude of the source of the Columbia river—he is under a misapprehension. He put it at 49°. But it is far north of that. It is navigable by canoes to the Three Forks, about the latitude of 52° How far beyond that is its head spring, I know not.

Mr. Greenhow, in his work on Oregon—a work marked with talent, industry, and caution—has explained how this misapprehension respecting the parallel of 49° originated. He has brought forward proofs, both positive and negative, to show that no such line was established by the treaty of Utrecht, nor by commissaries, named to carry its provisions into effect. I shall not go over the subject, but beg leave to refer the gentlemen, who maintain the contrary opinion, to the investigations they will find in that work. The assertion, however, has been so peremptorily made, and the conclusions drawn from it, if true, and if the line extended to Oregon, would discredit so large a portion of our title to that country, that I may be pardoned for briefly alluding to one or two considerations, which seem to me to demonstrate the error respecting this assumed line of parallel of 49°, at any rate in its extension to Oregon.

It will be perceived, sir, that there are two questions involved in this matter: one a purely historical question, whether commissaries acting under the treaty of Utrecht, established the parallel of 49° as the boundary between the French and English possessions upon this continent; and the other a practical one, whether such a line was extended west to the Pacific ocean.

As to the first, sir, I refer honorable Senators to Mr. Greenhow's work, and to the authorities he quotes. I do not presume to speak authoritatively upon the question, but I do not hesitate to express my opinion that Mr. Greenhow has made out a strong case; and my own impression is, that such a line was not actually and officially established. Still, sir, I do not say that it is a point, upon which there may not be differences of opinion; nor that, however it may be ultimately determined, the solution of the matter will discredit the judgment of any one. This, however, has relation to the line terminating with the Hudson Bay possessions; and, as I have observed, the fact is a mere question of history, without the least bearing upon our controversy with England.

I have, however, one preliminary remark to make in this connexion, and it is this: let him who asserts that our claim west of the Rocky mountains is bounded by the parallel of 49°, prove it. The burden is upon him, not upon us. If commissaries under the treaty of Utrecht established it, produce their award. Proof of it, if it exists, is to be found in London or Paris. Such an act was not done without leaving the most authentic evidence behind it. Produce it. When was the award made? What were its terms? What were its circumstances? Why, a suit between man and man for an *inch* of land, would not be decided by such evidence as this, especially discredited as it is, in any court of the United States. The party claiming under it would be told, *There is better evidence in your power. Seek it in London or Paris, and bring forward the certified copy of the proceedings of the commissioners.* This is equally the dictate of common sense and of common law, and there is not always the same union between those high tribunals, as many know, to their cost. Let no man, therefore, assume this line as a barrier to his country's claim without proving it.

This line is first historically made known in the negotiations between our Government and that of England by Mr. Madison, in a despatch to Mr. Monroe in 1804. Mr. Madison alludes to an historical notice he had somewhere found, stating that commissioners under the treaty of Utrecht had established the line of 49° as the boundary of the British and French possessions, thus fixing that parallel as the northern boundary of Louisiana. I have examined this despatch, and I find that he speaks doubtfully respecting the authenticity of this notice; and desires Mr. Monroe, before he made it the basis of a proposition, to ascertain if the facts were truly stated, as the means of doing so were not to be found in this country. Mr. Monroe, however, could have made no investigation; or

if he did so, it must have been unsatisfactory, for he transmits the proposition substantially in the words of the historian Douglas, from whom, probably, Mr. Madison acquired this notice, without reference to any authority, either historical or diplomatic.

I cannot find, that the British Government ever took the slightest notice of the assertion respecting this incident, growing out of the treaty of Utrecht, though it has been referred to more than once by our diplomatic agents, in their communications to the British authorities since that period.

But in late years, it has disappeared from the correspondence, and neither party has adverted to it, nor relied upon it. It is strange, indeed, that in this body we should now assume the existence of a fact like this, supposed to have a most important bearing upon the rights of the parties, when the able men to whose custody the maintenance of these rights has been recently committed, have totally abandoned it in their arguments and illustrations. The assumption was originally an erroneous one—certainly so, so far as respects Oregon; but while it was believed to be true, the consequences were rightfully and honestly carried out by our Government, and the line was claimed as a boundary. But our Government is now better informed, as the British Government, no doubt, always were, and thence their silence upon the subject; and the titles of both parties are investigated without reference to this historical error, or to the position in which it temporarily placed them.

The treaty of Utrecht never refers to the parallel of 49°, and the boundaries it proposed to establish were those between the French and English colonies, including the Hudson Bay Company in Canada. The charter of the Hudson Bay Company granted to the proprietors all the "lands, countries, and territories," upon the waters discharging themselves into Hudson's Bay. At the date of the treaty of Utrecht, which was in 1713, Great Britain claimed nothing west of those "lands, countries, and territories," and of course there was nothing to divide between her and France west of that line.

Again, in 1713, the northwestern coast was almost a *terra incognita*—a blank upon the map of the world. England then neither knew a foot of it, nor claimed a foot of it. By adverting to the letter of Messrs. Gallatin and Rush, communicating an account of their interview with Messrs. Goulburn and Robinson, British commissioners, dated October 20th, 1818, and to the letter of Mr. Pakenham to Mr. Calhoun, dated September 12th, 1844, it will be seen that the commencement of the British claim is effectively limited to the discoveries of Captain Cook in 1778. How, then, could a boundary have been established fifty years before, in a region where no Englishman had ever penetrated, and to which England had never asserted a pretension? And yet the assumption, that the parallel of 49 degrees was established by the treaty of Utrecht, as a line between France and England, in those unknown regions, necessarily involves these inconsistent conclusions. But besides, if England, as a party to the treaty of Utrecht, established this line running to the western ocean as the northern boundary of Louisiana, what possible claim has she now south of that line? The very fact of her existing pretensions, however unfounded these may be, shows that she considers herself no party to such a line of division. It shows, in fact, that no line was run; for if it had been, the evidence of it would be in the English archives, and, in truth, would be known to the world without contradiction. The establishment of a boundary between two great nations is no hidden fact; and we may now safely assume, that the parallel of 49° never divided the Oregon territory, and establishes no barrier to the rights by which we claim it. The assertion was originally a mere *dictum*, now shown to be unfounded.

The Senator from Maine has adverted likewise to the treaty of 1763, as furnishing additional testimony in favor of this line. That treaty merely provides, that the *confines between the British and French dominions shall be fixed irrevocably by a line drawn along the middle of the river Mississippi, from its source, &c.* This is the whole provision that bears upon this subject. I do not stop to analyze it. That cannot be necessary. It is obvious that this arrangement merely established the Mississippi river as a boundary between the two countries, leaving their other claims precisely as they formerly existed. And this, too, was fifteen years before the voyage of Captain Cook, the commencement of the British title on the northwest coast. Briefly, sir, there are six reasons, which prove that this parallel was never established under the treaty of Utrecht, so far at least as regards Oregon.

1. It is not shown that any line was established on the parallel of 49 to the Pacific ocean.

If the fact be so, the proper evidence is at Paris or London, and should be produced.

2. The country on the northwestern coast was then unknown, and I believe unclaimed; or, at any rate, no circumstances had arisen to call in question any claim to it.

3. The British negotiators in 1826, and their Minister here in 1844, fixed, in effect, upon the voyage of Captain Cook in 1778 as the commencement of the British title in what is now called Oregon.

4. The treaty of Utrecht provides for the establishment of a line between the French and English colonies, including the Hudson Bay Company. The British held nothing west of that company's possessions, which, by the charter, includes only the "lands, countries, and territories," on the waters running into Hudson's Bay.

5. If England established the line to the Pacific ocean, she can have no claim south of it; and this kind of *argumentum ad hominem* becomes conclusive. And, let me add, that I owe this argument to my friend from Missouri, [Mr. ATCHISON,] to whose remarks upon Oregon the Senate listened with profit and pleasure some days since.

6. How could France and England claim the country to the Pacific, so as to divide it between them in 1730, when, as late as 1790, the British Government, by the Nootka convention, expressly recognised the Spanish title to that country, and claimed only the use of it for its own subjects, in common with those of Spain?

I now ask, sir, what right has any American statesman, or what right has any British statesman, to contend that our claim, whatever it may be, is not just as good north of this line as it is south of it? When this question is answered to

my satisfaction, I, for one, will consent to stop there. But until then, I am among those, who mean to march, if we can, to the Russian boundary.

Now, Mr. President, it is the very ground assumed by the Senator from North Carolina, and by other Senators, respecting this parallel of 49°, together with the course of this discussion, which furnishes me with the most powerful argument against the reference of this controversy to arbitration.

I have shown, I trust, that there is no such line of demarcation, established under the treaty of Utrecht, extending to the Oregon territory, and the misapprehension, whence the opinion arose.

While such a conviction prevailed, it was fairly and properly assumed by the Government as the northern boundary of the Oregon claim, before the Florida treaty. Since that treaty I consider the offers on our part as offers of compromise, not recognitions of a line, from the resumption of negotiations by Mr. Rush, who carried our title to 51°, to their abandonment in 1827 by Mr. Gallatin, who, finding a satisfactory adjustment impossible, withdrew the pending offer, and asserted that his Government "would consider itself at liberty to contend for the full extent of the claims of the United States." And for their full extent we do claim. And I take the opportunity to tender my small tribute of approbation to the general conduct of these negotiations by the American Government, and their commissioners, and especially to Mr. Rush, a citizen as well known for his private worth as for his high talents and great public services, and who seems to have been the first, as Mr. Greenhow remarks, "to inquire carefully into the facts of the case."

And it is not one of the least curious phases of this controversy, that down to this very day the pretensions of England are either wholly contradictory, or are shrouded in apparently studied obscurity. She asserts no exclusive claim anywhere, but an equal claim everywhere.

"A right of joint occupancy in the Oregon terri-'tory," says the British Minister in his letter to Mr. Calhoun, dated September 12, 1844, "of 'which right she can be divested with respect to 'any part of that territory, only by an equal parti-'tion of the *whole between the parties.*"

And yet, notwithstanding he refers to the *whole* territory, still, in the protocol of the conference at Washington, dated September 24, 1844, he *refused to enter into any discussion respecting the country north of 49°, because it was understood by the British Government to form the basis of negotiation on the part of the United States.* Thus, on the 12th of September, recognising our right to an equal, undivided moiety of Oregon, and two weeks after coolly claiming the northern half of it, as a fact not even to be called into question, and then offering to discuss with us the mutual claims of the two countries to the southern half!

Well, sir, influenced by the motives I have stated, and by a desire to terminate this tedious controversy, this parallel of 49°, sometimes with, and sometimes without an accessory, has been four times offered by us to the British Government, and four times rejected, and once indignantly so; and three times withdrawn. Twice withdrawn in the very terms—once by Mr. Gallatin, November 15, 1826, who withdrew a proposition made by Mr. Rush, and once during the present Administration; and once withdrawn in effect, though without the use of that word, by Mr. Gallatin, in 1827, who announced to the British negotiators "that his Government did not hold itself bound 'hereafter, in consequence of any proposal, which 'it had made for a line of separation between the 'territories of the two nations beyond the Rocky 'mountains; but would consider itself at liberty to 'contend for the full extent of the claims of the 'United States."

The Senator from Louisiana will perceive, that he was in error yesterday, when he said, that no offer of a compromise had ever been withdrawn, till the withdrawal made by the present Administration, unless such offer had been announced as an ultimatum. But without recurring to any authority upon this subject, it is evident, that if a nation is forever bound by an offer of compromise, no prudent nation would ever make such an offer. There would be no reciprocity in such a condition of things. In controversies respecting territory, each party would hold on to its extreme limit; for if it made an offer less than that, it would abandon, in fact, so much of its own pretensions, leaving those of its opponent in their full integrity.

Such, sir, is the state of our controversy with England; and yet honorable Senators upon this floor, able lawyers and jurists also, maintain that this line, thus offered, and refused, and withdrawn, is now in effect the limit of our claim, and that we are bound honorably, and morally, and they say, at the risk of the censure of the world, to receive it it as our boundary whenever England chooses so to accept it. This is all very strange, and would seem to me so untenable, as not to be worthy of examination, if it were not urged by such high authorities. Let us look at it.

The honorable Senator from Maryland has entered more fully into this branch of the subject than any other member of this body, and I shall therefore confine my inquiries to his remarks.

There are two propositions connected with this matter, which it is proper to consider separately. The first is, the obligation upon the President, agreeably to his own views, to accept this rejected offer, if it comes back to him; and the other is, the obligation upon the country, and upon this body, as one of its depositaries of the treaty-making power, to confirm the act of the President, should it come here for confirmation. What, sir, is a compromise? It is an offer made by one party to the other to take less than his whole claim, with a view to an amicable adjustment of the controversy, whatever this may be. The doctrine of compromises is founded upon universal reason; and its obligations, I believe, are everywhere the same, whether in the codes of municipal or general law. An offer made in this spirit never furnishes the slightest presumption against the claim of the party making it; and for the best of reasons, not only that this amicable process of settlement may be encouraged and extended, but because it will often happen, that both individuals and nations may be willing to sacrifice a portion of what they consider their just rights, rather than encounter the certain expense and trouble, and the uncertain issue of litigation, whether that litigation be in a court of justice, or upon a battle-field. Such is the general

principle; and the practical operation of any other would hold one of the parties forever bound, and leave the other forever free. One makes his offer, and must adhere to it, while the other declines it, or refuses it, and still may hold on to it indefinitely.

Surely it cannot be necessary to pursue this illustration farther. Such a construction as this, which plays fast and loose at the same time, carries with it its own refutation, however respectable the authority, which attempts to support it. But, reverting to the obligation of the President, what says the honorable Senator from Maryland? He says that the President—not James K. Polk, but the Chief Magistrate of the nation—having felt an implied obligation to renew the offer of 49°, is now bound in all time to accept it, and, I suppose, patiently to wait for it, till the demand comes. I must say, that in this brief abstract of the President's views, the Senator has hardly done justice to him. I do not stand here to say, what the President will do, should Great Britain propose to accept the parallel of 49° as the boundary between the two countries. In the first place, it would be to argue upon a gratuitous assumption. I have not the slightest reason to believe, that the British Government have given any intimation that it will ever come back to that line. But, in the second place, if it should, what then? The incipient step is for the President to take, and I should leave the matter here, without remark, had not the Senator from Maryland, and the Senator from North Carolina, and other Senators, labored to impress the conviction, that the President ought, and must, and would, close with the British proposition to accept the parallel of 49°, should it be made. I shall not analyze the words of the President's Message, but content myself with a general allusion to it. Truth is seldom promoted by picking out particular phrases, and placing them in juxtaposition. The President says—and it is evident the whole Message was carefully prepared—that though he entertained the settled conviction, that the British title to any portion of Oregon could not be maintained; yet, in deference to the action of his predecessors, and to what had been done, and in consideration, that the pending negotiation had been commenced on the basis of compromise, he determined, in a spirit of compromise, to offer a part of what had been offered before—the parallel of 49°, without the navigation of the Columbia river. He says this proposition was rejected, and in what terms we all know, and that he immediately withdrew it, and then asserted our title to the whole of Oregon, and maintained it by irrefragable arguments. Now, sir, I am not going to argue with any man, who seeks to deduce from this language a conviction in the mind of the President, that he considers himself under the slightest obligation to England to accept the parallel of 49°, should she desire it as a boundary. In this account of his proceedings, he is explaining to his countrymen the operations of his own mind, the reasons which induced him to make this offer, made, as he says, "in deference alone to what had been done by my predecessors, and the implied obligations their acts seemed to impose." What obligations? None to England, for none had been created; but the obligations imposed upon a prudent statesman to look at the actions and views of his predecessors, and not to depart from them without good reasons. The obvious meaning is this: I found the negotiations pending; after an interval of almost twenty years, they had been renewed; they began on the basis of compromise, and though three times a compromise had been offered to England and rejected, and though she had not the slightest right to claim, or even to expect it would be offered to her again, and though I determined, that the same proposition should not be offered to her, still, as a proof of the moderation of the United States, I deemed it expedient to make her another offer, less than the preceding one, which a quarter of a century before she had rejected. A curious obligation this, if it has reference to the rights of England, and a curious mode of fulfilling it! If he (the President) were under any obligation to her, the obligation was complete, to make the offer as it had been made before. And she has the same right to claim the navigation of the Columbia river, that she has to claim the parallel of 49° as a boundary; and the honorable Senator from Louisiana has placed the matter upon this very ground. Assuming, that the obligation referred to by the President was an obligation to England, he thinks the President failed in his duty in not carrying out his own views of the national duties.

Why, sir, if offers of compromise were to be made till doomsday, the rights of both parties would remain in their integrity. And what offer creates this implied obligation? Several offers have been made by our Government to that of England for the adjustment of this controversy. Which creates this obligation, one of them, or all of them? But it is very clear, sir, that neither of them creates it. The common-sense view of this subject is the true one in this case, as in most other cases. The party offering says to its adversary, I will consent to that line. If you consent to it, our controversy will be amicably adjusted. The only obligation created by this act is, to allow reasonable time to the other party for decision, and then faithfully to adhere to the terms, should they be accepted. If unreasonably delayed, still more if rejected, both parties are thrown back upon their original position, unembarrassed by this attempt at conciliation.

But, sir, the President is a judge of his own duties. I am not afraid to leave them with him—they are in safe keeping. Should the question respecting this parallel ever be presented to him for decision, I have a perfect conviction, that whether he decide for it or against it, or refer it to the consideration of the Senate, he will fulfil his responsible duties with a conscientious regard to the high obligations he is under to the country and to the Constitution. But we, too, have duties to perform, and among these may be the necessity of deciding for ourselves the nature and extent of this obligation upon the nation.

I do not speak now of any considerations of expediency, which may operate upon the decision of this matter. There are none which will operate upon me. But I assume to myself no right to prescribe the course of others, whether of the President or of the Senate, or to judge it when taken. But I reject this doctrine of a national obligation to England. I deny the right of any one to commit the faith of this country to a rejected line—to bind us, leaving our opponent unbound—to convert a mere offer of compromise into the surrender of a claim; to change the established opinions and usages of the world upon this subject. It seems to me, that a cause cannot be strong which needs such auxiliaries for its support.

But, sir, this doctrine, as I before observed, and the course of the remarks by which it is endeavored to maintain it, furnish to me conclusive arguments against the reference of this controversy to arbitration. Here, at home, in this coordinate branch of the national legislature, we are told, and

almost *ex cathedra* too, that we have concluded ourselves, by this offer of 49°, and that upon that parallel must be our boundary, when England makes up her mind to come to it. Now, in this state of the matter, what would be the effect of an arbitration? The Secretary of State, in his answer to the British Minister, has ably and truly exposed the tendency of this process of adjustment, whether public or private. Its tendency is not to settle the actual rights of the parties, but to compromise them. To divide, and not to decide. We all know this, and he who runs may read it in the history of almost every arbitration, within the circle of his observation. Though, as I have already said, the offers of compromise we have made to England ought not to furnish the slightest presumption against the validity of our whole claim, and would not before any well-regulated judicial tribunal in Christendom, yet commit our cause to arbitration, and where are we? We might as well throw to the winds all the facts, and arguments, and illustrations, upon which we build our claim, and say to the arbitrators, do as you please, we are at your mercy. For this they would do at any rate. They would not heed your views, but they would turn to the history of the controversy, and to the course of the parties. They would measure what each had offered, and would split the difference to the ninth part of a hair. They would assume, that the American claim goes to the 49th parallel, and the British claim to the Columbia river; and they would add, and subtract, and multiply, and divide, till all this process would end in a tolerably equal partition of what no one upon this floor denies, and what every American, or almost every American, as firmly believes makes part of his country, as does the tomb at Mount Vernon, or the grave at the Hermitage, where countless generations of men will come as to places of pilgrimage—not, indeed, to worship, but to think upon the days and the deeds of the patriots and warriors, who sleep below. You could not find a sovereign nor a subject, a State nor a citizen in Christendom, who, in such a controversy between two great nations, would not rather decide with the dividers, than with the titles. Well, sir, I agree fully, that if we wish to get rid of all this matter without regard to the why or the how, we may safely commit it to the custody of arbitrators. Their decision, though we should know it beforehand, might be considered a plaster for our wounded honor. A poor one, indeed, which would leave a most unsightly scar. But, in reality, sir, this course of action would be open and obvious to ourselves and to the world. Its motives and its results would be equally palpable. We should lose much in interest, and much more in character. For myself, I would far rather divide with England this portion of the territory, than commit our rights to arbitration. There would be some magnanimity in such a procedure. But to take shelter behind this form of trial is to resort to a miserable subterfuge, which, under the pretext of an equal adjustment, would be but a surrender. If, then, we seriously believe in our own claims, even to 49°, and sincerely desire to maintain them, we must unite in approving the rejection, by the President, of this pacific means of transferring to England a valuable part of our common country.

Mr. President, the honorable Senator from North Carolina, not now in his seat, called those, who believe our title to 54° 40' to be clear, the *ultra* friends of the President, and, I understood him, he claimed to be his true friend, saving him from those imprudent ones. As I find myself in this category, I am obnoxious to the charge, and with the natural instinct of self defence, I desire to repel it. We are *ultra* friends, because we do not stop at 49°. I have already shown, that there is no stopping-place on that parallel—no true rest for an American foot. The Senator himself considers our title to that line clear and indisputable, and I understood him that he would maintain it, come what might. Well, if it is found that the treaty of Utrecht no more extended to Oregon than to the moon, whatever other boundary may be sought or found, it cannot be that purely gratuitous boundary—the parallel of 49°. And as the Senator from North Carolina must leave it, where will he find a better barrier than the Russian possessions? But he says, also, that though our title to the country north of 49° is not indisputable, still it is better than any other title. Now, I will appeal to the Senator's charity—no, not to his charity, that is not necessary—but I will appeal to his sense of justice, to say, whether such a difference of opinion as exists between himself and me on this subject can justly be characterized as *ultraism* on my part. Our title, he says, is the best—not indisputable; but still the best. The same evidence, which produced this conviction in his mind, produces a stronger one in mine; and this is the tribute, which every day's experience pays to human fallibility. We are differently constituted, and differently affected by the same facts and arguments. While the honorable Senator stands upon the parallel of 49°, as the precise line, where our questionable and unquestionable titles meet, there are many, and I am among the number, who carry our unquestionable title to the Russian boundary in one direction, and some, perhaps, though I have not found one, who carry it in another direction to the Columbia river. It seems to me in bad taste, to say the least of it, for any member to assume his own views as infallible, and to say to all the world, who differ from him, whether on the right hand or on the left, My opinion is the true standard of orthodoxy, and every one, who departs from it is a *heretic* and an *ultra*. Thus to stigmatize a large portion of the Senate, is not, I am sure, the intention of the Senator; but such is, in fact and effect, the direct tendency of his remarks. We are *ultra*, because, to use a somewhat quaint but a forcible apothegm, *we will not measure our corn by his bushel*. Why, sir, we have each a bushel of our own, given us by the Creator, and till the Senator's is sealed and certified by a higher authority, we beg leave to keep our own, and to measure our duties by it.

I did not understand the precise object of some of the remarks of the Senator from North Carolina, though I had less difficulty respecting the remarks themselves. He told us the President nowhere claimed 54° 40'; and I presume he thus c[illegible]nded in order to show that the President might consistently accept any boundary south of that parallel. I again disclaim all interference with the President in the execution of his duties. I do not think, that what he will do in a gratuitous case, should furnish the subject of speculation upon this floor. I know what I will do, and that is enough for me; and as I took the opportunity, three years ago, in a public and printed address, at Fort Wayne, to define my position in this matter, before I became a member of this body, my allusion to it here cannot be deemed the premature expression of my opinion. I then said:

"Our claim to the country west of the Rocky mountains 'is as undeniable as our right to Bunker's Hill and New 'Orleans; and who will call in question our title to these 'blood-stained fields? And I trust it will be maintained 'with a vigor and promptitude equal to its justice. War is 'a great evil, but not so great as national dishonor. Little 'is gained by yielding to insolent and unjust pretensions. 'It is better to defend the first inch of territory than the last. 'Far better, in dealing with England, to resist aggression, 'whether of impressment, of search, or of territory, when 'first attempted, than to yield in the hope, that forbearance 'will be met in a just spirit, and will lead to an amicable 'compromise. Let us have no red lines upon the map of 'Oregon. Let us hold on to the integrity of our just claim. 'And if war come, be it so; I do not believe it will be long 'avoided, unless prevented by intestine difficulties in the 'British Empire. And wo be to us, if we flatter ourselves it 'can be arrested by any system of concession. Of all delu-'sions, this would be the most fatal, and we should awake 'from it a dishonored, if not a ruined people."

Now the Oregon I claim, is all Oregon, and no vote of mine in this Senate will surrender one *inch* of it to England. But the Senator from North Carolina says, that the Oregon the President claims is an Oregon of his own, and not the country, which now excites the anxious solicitude of the American people. And if it were so, is it the duty of a friend, I may almost say claiming to be an exclusive one, to hold up to his countrymen the word of promise of their Chief Magistrate, thus kept to the ear, but not to the hope? But it is not so. The honorable Senator has been led into an error—a palpable error. The President says the British pretensions could not be maintained to *any portion of the Oregon territory*. He says, also, that our title to the *whole of the Oregon territory* is maintained by irrefragable facts and arguments. He says British laws have been extended throughout the *whole of Oregon*. Now, sir, has any man a right to say, that the President falters in his purpose, by talking of the whole of a country, when he does not mean the whole of it? No, sir; the idea never occurred to him, never crossed his mind. When he said Oregon, he meant so; and I have no more doubt, than I have of my existence, that he believes as firmly in the American title to it, as he believes he is now the Chief Magistrate of the United States.

If it were possible, that this proposition needed support, it would be easily found. The communications of the Secretary of State, are the communications of the President, written by his direction and submitted for his approbation, and never sent without his supervision, and very seldom, I imagine, without emendations by him. The correspondence with the British Minister, laid before us at the commencement of the session, was doubly his. His, because carried on by his Secretary of State, with a foreign Government, and his because communicated to Congress and his country, as the depository of his views and measures. Well, sir, in

the letter from the Secretary of State to Mr. Pakenham, dated July 12, 1845, Mr. Buchanan says:

"Upon the whole, from the most careful and ample examination which the undersigned has been able to bestow upon the subject, he is satisfied that the Spanish American title now held by the United States, embracing the whole territory between the parallels of 42 degrees and 54 degrees 40 minutes, is the best title in existence to this entire region," &c.

And he adds.

"Notwithstanding such was and still is the opinion of the President," &c.

Human words and human deeds are worthless to disclose human opinions, if the Oregon of the President is not the Oregon we claim and hope to secure.

The Senator from North Carolina has presented to us some peculiar views of the President's position and duties, and has deduced his future course, not from his Message, but from extrinsic circumstances, acts of *omission* and of *commission*, as he calls them, by which the language of the President is to be controlled, and his further course in this controversy regulated. I doubt the propriety, as well as the wisdom, of all this, either as regards the President, the Senate, or the country. If successful in his declarations or expositions, whichever they may be, I do not see what practical advantage the Senator expected to gain. The President would still have to perform his own duties, and we to perform ours, without reference to the embarrassments created by this novel mode of reading the past views and the future course of the Chief Magistrate. In the mean time, what better plan could be devised to excite the public mind, and to rouse suspicions, which would fly upon the wings of the wind to the farthest verge of the country? No such intention ever entered the mind of the honorable Senator; but I submit to him, if, in its very nature, this process is not calculated to produce such a result, and whether, in fact, it has not produced it. And yet, it seems to me, that the reasons in support of it are utterly insufficient to justify the conclusions.

What are these reasons? I will just touch some of them, having no time to pursue the subject.

There were two acts of *commission*: one was the offer before made of the parallel of 49° as a compromise; and the other was the expression of Mr. Buchanan in his last letter to the British Minister, dated August 30th, 1845, that the President hoped the controversy would be terminated without a collision.

Now, sir, as to the first. I trust I have shown, that whatever course the President may pursue respecting the parallel of 49°, as a boundary hereafter, his duty will be before him, unembarrassed by the offer heretofore made, and that, consequently, that circumstance is no key to unlock the hidden future.

And as to the second. I will ask the honorable Senator if, upon reflection, he thinks the expression of the President's hope is really entitled to this grave consideration.

It seems to me partly a polite and courteous phrase, and partly the sincere declaration of a wish, that some mode might be devised for an amicable adjustment of this matter. Let us not deprive diplomatists of that hope, which carries us all forward to the bright recompense of the future. But let us not convert the expression of it into solid promises, nor settled convictions.

And what are the acts of *omission*? One is the neglect to recommend defensive measures, and the other is a want of confidence in the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations.

And now for the first. I presume ere this the honorable Senator is aware, that he has entirely misunderstood the views of the President upon this subject. In his Message, at the commencement of the session, the President recommended that a force of mounted riflemen should be raised, and also an augmentation of the naval means of the country. But later in the session, in conformity with resolutions which originated here, recommendations and estimates, seen and approved by the President, and his in fact, agreeably to the constitution of our Executive department, were sent, by the Secretaries of War and of the Navy, to the proper committees of the Senate. A bill was reported by the Naval Committee for an additional steam force, and was ably and vigorously advocated by the honorable chairman of that committee. But it was put to sleep, partly, if not principally, I believe, upon the ground that, if you cannot immediately equip a navy, therefore you must not build a ship; and if you do not require an army, therefore you must not raise a regiment. And the result may well have been taken as an indication both by the Naval and Military Committees, that the Senate did not deem an augmentation of the defensive means of the country necessary under the circumstances, and therefore prevented all further action on their part, as useless. For I consider the proposition of the Naval Committee, thus put to sleep, one of the least objectionable of all the measures submitted to us under the sanction of the President. I have looked over these estimates, sir, both from the War and Navy Departments, and I consider them proper and judicious, in the existing state of our relations with England; and I will add, the heads of both of those departments discharged their responsible duties—for their duties were responsible—in a satisfactory manner.

A brief recapitulation may not be unacceptable, nor unprofitable.

The Secretary of War recommended the immediate passage of a bill for the new works.

An appropriation of $300,000 for the fortification and obstruction of channels; and also for field works.

An appropriation of $100,000 for general contingencies in the field, including the preparation of a pontoon equipage.

An estimate of the sum of $5,000,000, as necessary for fortifications and obstructions, to be appropriated when Congress might think the aspect of affairs threatened hostilities, and then to be placed at the disposition of the President.

The estimate for ordnance and ordnance stores amounted to $4,279,680—of course to be appropriated as Congress might deem proper.

An addition to the army of so many privates as would raise each company to 100 men, thus adding 7,930 men to the army.

Authority to the President to raise 50,000 volunteers, to be called into the public service for one year, whenever required.

The propositions respecting fortifications and ordnance came from the proper bureaus, and the proposition for an augmentation of the army and a volunteer force came from the commanding general, whose high character and gallant services in the field, justly give great weight to his opinions; and those propositions were assumed by the Secretary, and he became responsible for them.

The Secretary of the Navy recommended an accumulation of naval materials and stores to the amount of $1,060,000.

For the repair and equipment of all the vessels in ordinary, and of the frigates of the United States, $2,145,000.

For three steam-frigates, five steam-sloops, and two steamers of a smaller class, $3,310,000.

Naval ordnance and stores, $360,000.

How these estimates were prepared in the Navy Department, the document in my possession does not show. I presume they went through the proper bureaus. They came to the Senate, however, as the act of the Secretary.

It is obvious that all these appropriations, in any contingency, would not be wanted for some time; and, indeed, that the full legislative action upon the subject would await the developments growing out of our foreign relations. Ordinary prudence requires that a commencement should be immediately made; to what extent, Congress must judge. But it will be remarked, that much the larger portion of these estimates is for materials and supplies, which we must have, some time or other, and ought to have ere long, let the aspect of our foreign affairs be as it may.

In making this provision, we but anticipate our necessities, and the worst that can happen will be, that we shall be sooner prepared for a state of things, for which we ought to be always prepared.

As to the mode of receiving this information, it has been sanctioned by the practice of the Government for years. Congress and its committees have been in the daily habit of calling upon the heads of the departments for the necessary facts and views in the discharge of their legislative duties. And, in all cases like the present, the reports are submitted to the President before being sent here, and thus receive his sanction, and they are often changed by his directions. This is well known to all, who are acquainted with the routine of our executive department.

To return now, sir, to this act of omission, this neglect to recommend proper measures of defence, by which the President's views are to be interpreted, as I understand, in this manner. The President recommends no measures of defence. Therefore he considers the country in no danger. Therefore he intends to yield to the parallel of 49°, which the British Government intends to demand; and thus there will be no war. Now, sir, more than two months before this position was taken by the honorable Senator, the President had recommended by his Secretaries an addition to the army of almost 8,000 men, the organization of 50,000 volunteers, the removal of the limitations respecting naval establishments, that he might be able to direct such an augmentation of the seamen of the navy as circumstances might require, and appropriations for military purposes to the amount of $9,679,680; and for naval purposes to the amount of $6,515,000—making in the whole $16,195,680, in addition to the recommendations in his Message at the commence-

ment of the session, and to the ordinary estimates of the department.

It is unnecessary to pursue this topic. Whatever may be the just construction of the President's meaning, which to me is exceedingly clear, it is now obvious that this act of omission becomes an act of commission, and proves that the President is by no means tranquil respecting the condition of the country.

As to the alleged want of Executive confidence in the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, I hardly know how to speak of it becomingly, when urged in this connexion. Were the fact so, it would seem very strange to me, and I should think the President very badly advised, to withhold a proper confidence from one of his truest and most efficient friends upon this floor, and one, too, who, from his position at the head of a most important committee, was officially entitled to it.

No one, who has witnessed the energy, the talent, and the promptitude of the honorable chairman, can doubt the service he has rendered this Administration, nor the confidence he deserves—a confidence, indeed, demanded more for the sake of the public interest, than for his own sake.

But, sir, I have reason to know that the Senator from North Carolina is in error in all this; that this deduction from extrinsic circumstances is but another proof, that truth is not always attained when sought by indirect and remote facts. I have reason to know, that the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations communicates freely with the President, and enjoys his confidence.

And what proof of estrangement between these high functionaries is furnished by the honorable Senator from North Carolina? Why, thus stands the case: The honorable chairman stated that the opinions of the President had undergone no change; but being interrogated upon the subject, he answered, that the records, and the records alone, were the sources of his information.

It seems to me it would better become our position if we all sought the views of the President, so far as we ought to seek them, in the same authentic documents. It would save a world of unprofitable conjecture. Now, sir, what does all this amount to? Why, to this: the President told the Senator from Ohio no more, as to his future course than he told the country and Congress in his Message. It would be strange if he had. The avowal of a line of policy, when the proper circumstances are before him, is the duty of a sound and practical statesman. But I should much doubt the wisdom of the Chief Magistrate of a great country, who should sit down to speculate upon future and remote contingencies, affecting the public welfare, with a view even to the decision upon his own course, and still less with a view to its annunciation to the world.

Let me, then, ask the Senator, if he thinks it is the duty of the chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations to put gratuitous questions to the President, in order that he may be able to come here and declare what the Executive will do in such and such a contingency, which may never happen; or which, if it do happen, may bring with it circumstances, that may change the whole aspect of the question? But I forbear, sir. I consider it unnecessary to pursue this question further.

A considerable portion of the argument of the Senator from North Carolina was devoted to prove that the Message of the President did not justify these anticipations of war, which it appears to myself and to other Senators to do. Not that he called in question the natural tendency of the measures recommended by the President, nor the fair construction of his language; but he controlled these by the extrinsic facts to which I have adverted. I shall say nothing more upon this subject, but I shall fortify my own opinion by the views of other members of this body, who are entitled to more weight than I am.

The honorable Senator from South Carolina said "that the recommendation in the Message is founded upon the conviction, that there is no hope of compromise of the difficulties growing out of the President's Message is too clear to admit of any doubt."

After some further remarks, showing the opinions entertained of the dangers of war, he adds: "Entertaining these opinions, we were compelled to oppose notice, because it was necessary to prevent an appeal to arms, and insure the peaceful settlement of the question."

And the Senator from Maryland said: "We have all felt, Mr. President, that at one time at least—I trust that time is past—the nation was in imminent danger. From the moment that the President of the United States deemed it right and becoming, in the very outset of his official career, to announce to the world that the title to the northwest territory was clear and indisputable, down to his Message in December last, I could not see how war was to be averted."

And the honorable Senator from Louisiana, in his speech yesterday, advanced the same opinion upon this subject.

And the Senator from Georgia also expressed the conviction that "this resolution, based as it is on the President's Message, is a distinct intimation to Great Britain that this matter must be settled, and in a manner acceptable to us, or that at the expiration of that time we will take forcible possession of the whole country," which of course means war.

And he adds that "the Senator from North Carolina tells us, that the President is waiting at the open door of his cabinet, ready to adjust this controversy, and to preserve the peace of the country." "Sir," he adds, "even with the aid of the Senator's optics, I cannot see him there." And he adds also, if these things were so, referring to the views of the Senator from North Carolina respecting the President's Message, "I should be sorry to do so." And I fully concur with him in the sentiment.

Now, sir, I shall not thrust myself into this dispute—

"Non nostrum inter vos tantas componere lites."

During the progress of this discussion, the blessings of peace and the horrors of war have been frequently presented to us with the force of truth, and sometimes with the fervency of an excited imagination. I have listened attentively to all this, though much of it I remember to have heard thirty-five years ago. But I beg honorable Senators to recollect, that upon this side of the chamber we have interests, and families, and homes, and a country, as well as they have; and that we are as little disposed to bring war upon our native land, unnecessarily, as they can be. That some of us know by experience, all of us by reading and reflection, the calamities, moral and physical, that war brings in its train. And we appreciate the blessings of peace with a conviction as deep and as steadfast. And no one desires its continuance more earnestly than I do. But all this leaves untouched the only real subject of inquiry. That is not whether peace is a blessing and war a curse, but whether peace can be preserved, and war avoided, consistently with the honor and interest of the country. That question may come up for solution; and if it does, it must be met by each one of us, with a full sense of its abiding importance, and of his own responsibility. I suppose there is not a gentleman in this body, who will not say, that cases may occur, even in this stage of the world, which may drive this country to the extreme remedy of war, rather than she should submit to arrogant and unreasonable demands, or to direct attacks upon our rights and independence—like impressment, or the search of our ships, or various other acts, by which power is procured and maintained over the timid and the weak. The true practical question for a nation is not the cost of war, whether measured by dollars, or by dangers, or by disasters, but whether war can be honorably avoided; and that question each person having the power of determination must determine for himself, when the case is presented. Good men may indulge in day-dreams upon this subject, but he who looks upon the world as it has been, as it is, and as it is likely to be, must see that the moral constitution of man has undergone little change; and that interests and passions operate not less upon communities, than they did when the law of public might was the law of public right, more openly avowed than now. Certainly a healthful public opinion exerts a stronger influence over the world, than at any former period of its history. Governments are more or less restrained by it, and all feel the effects of it. Mistresses, and favorites, and minions, no longer drive nations to war, nor are mere questions of etiquette among the avowed causes of hostilities. It is not probable, that a people will ever be again overcome, because a statesman may consult his vanity rather than his taste in the choice of his pictures, nor that the state of Europe will be changed because a lady's silk gown may be spoiled by a cup of tea. Humanity has gained something—let us hope it will gain more. Questions of war are passing from cabinets to the people. If they are discussed in secret, they are also discussed before the world, for there is not a Government in Christendom, which would dare to rush into war, unless that measure were sanctioned by the state of public feeling. Still, let us not deceive ourselves. Let us not yet convert our swords into ploughshares, nor our spears into pruning-hooks, nor neglect the maritime and military defences of the country, lulled by the syren song of peace, peace, when there may be no peace. I am afraid we have not grown so much wiser and better, than our fathers, as many good people suppose. I do not discern upon the horizon of the future the first dawn of the millenium. The eagle and the lion will not always lie down in peace together. Nations are yet subject to human passions, and are too often their victims. The Government, which should say, I will not defend myself by force, would soon have nothing to defend. An honorable Senator quoted a remark I made some

time since—I will not say with a sneer, but with an appearance of disapprobation—that it was better to defend the first inch of national territory than the last. Does the honorable Senator believe in the converse of this proposition?—that it is better to defend the last inch of territory than the first? If he does, I sincerely trust, as well for his own sake as for the sake of his country, that he may never be driven to correct his error in the school of experience. What, however, the Senator from New Jersey did not do, the Senator from North Carolina has done. He sneers at *territorial* as well as *patriotic* inches; he means a "line in substance, *not every inch*." "I do not measure my own or other people's patriotism by the *inch*." "How one's American blood boils at the thought of ceding *inches*." He does not tell us by what standard he would measure the soil of the Republic, or the patriotism of her people. It is evident that he does not believe that wise old saying, "Give a man an *inch*, and he will take an *ell*." Give a nation a small strip, and it will demand a larger one. To attempt to purchase safety by concession is to build a bridge of gold, not for a retreating, but for an advancing enemy. Nations are like the daughters of the horse-leech; they cry, "give, give." It is idle, sir, to array ourselves against the powerful instincts of human nature; and he, who is dead to their influence, will find as little sympathy in this age of the world, as he would have found had he lived in the ages that are passed. If we suffer ourselves to be trodden upon, to be degraded, to be despoiled of our good name and our rights, under the pretext that war is unworthy of us or our time, we shall find ourselves in the decrepitude of age, before we have passed the period of manhood.

A great deal has been said in England, and not a little in the United States, respecting our grasping propensity in demanding the whole of Oregon; and we have been solemnly admonished of the awful responsibility of involving two great nations in war. The subject in dispute is said not to be worth the perils a conflict would bring with it; and the honorable Senator from Maine has exhibited to us, as in a balance, the disasters of war, and the value of the matter in controversy, and has made our territorial claims to kick the beam. Permit me to turn to the other side of this picture. I acknowledge the moral obligation of Governments to avoid war, where higher obligations do not drive them to it. I will not call England the Pharisee of nations, but I will say that she does not hide the light of her own good deeds under a bushel. The ocean scarcely beats upon a shore within sight of which her flag is not seen, and within sound of which her drum is not heard. And yet her moderation is proclaimed, and often with the sound of her cannon, from one end of the civilized world to the other. *She is not like other nations*, and least of all, like *that great grasping mobocracy of the West*. "I thank God," said the Pharisee of old, "that I am not as other men are." Now the chapter of accidents has turned up favorably for England, if she will accept the opportunity afforded her. No man in this country wants war—*ultraists* no more than *compromisists*, if I may use terms justified by the occasion. The extreme partisan of decisive measures asks nothing but the whole of Oregon. Give him that, and he will become as meek as the latest pre[illegible]r of humility, who writes homilies upon national m[illegible]ration for the London Times. Now, sir, let England abandon her pretensions, and all these disasters, the consequences of war, which are foretold—and I do not doubt many of them justly foretold—will give way, and exist only in the memory of this debate. There is no condition of things, foreseen by any man, public or private, in this country, which can give to England a better line than 49°. The country north of that line is therefore all she could gain by a contest, which is to involve the fearful consequences predicted to both countries; which during its progress, it is said, will bring nation after nation within the sphere of its operation, and which is finally to commit to the decision of the sword the great question of free government through the world, by placing in its path the antagonistic principle, that the many should be governed by the few. What, then, would England surrender to preserve the peace of the world, and thus give the first practical proof of moderation to be found in the long annals of her history? I agree fully with the honorable Senator from Missouri, [Mr. Atchison,] that if England would acknowledge our rights, and withdraw her opposition to them, and should then ask a better access to the ocean for her interior territories, I would grant it without hesitation, as a favor, upon the most reasonable consideration. If this should be done, she would have left about three hundred miles of coast to fight for; and I will return the question of the gentleman from Maine, and ask if this strip of land is worth the price of such a contest? England is already gorged with possessions, both continental and insular, overrun, almost overloaded with subjects of all castes, colors, and condition. At this very moment, she is waging two wars of aggrandizement—one for commercial projects upon the La Plata, and the other for a new empire upon the Indus. The latest Morning Chronicle I have seen, one of last month—and that paper is the Whig organ of England—says, and the proposition is enunciated with characteristic coolness, and with as much apparent candor, as if it were extracted from the latest treatise upon public morals, "*we can never govern India so well as we might, until we possess the whole of it.*" A congenial sentiment is quite as much at home in every English breast, that *America would be much better governed than it is, if England possessed the whole of it.*

Let the British Government now say, two wars at the same time are enough for the purposes of aggrandizement. We will not encounter a third—we will give up this doubtful and disputed claim, and hold on in America to what we have got—we will do so much for peace. Let her do this, and I, for one, will say, *well done*. You begin to practise, though upon a small scale, as you preach. And why not do so? This territory is separated by an ocean and a continent from England. She cannot long hold it, if she should gain it. I mean long, compared with the life of nations; whereas it joins us, intervenes between us and our communication with the Pacific, will form an integral—I do not doubt a perpetual—portion of our confederacy, will be, in time, a necessary outlet for our population, and presents all those elements of contiguity and of position, which indicate and invite political unions.

But it has been said and resaid, in the Senate and out of it, that two great nations cannot go to war. And why cannot two great nations go to war against one another, as well as two great nations combined against a small one? So far as honor contemns a disparity of force, the former would be much more honorable than the latter.

What is going on in the La Plata, where France and England have sent their united fleets and armies against the Argentine republic, and where the echoes of their cannon are ascending the Parana and its vast tributaries, till they are lost in the gorges of the Andes?

There can be no war in this enlightened age of the world! What, then, is passing in Africa, where one hundred thousand Christian bayonets have driven the Arab from his home, and are pursuing him into the desert, the refuge of the turban since the days of the patriarchs?

What is passing upon the shores of the Euxine, where the Cossack has left his native plains, and, at the call of Russia, is ascending the ridges of the Caucasus to subdue its indigenous races, and to substitute the *mild* rule of the Muscovite for their own patriarchal form of government—dependence upon the Czar for dependence upon themselves?

And what is passing in the Punjaub, where the last advices left two mighty armies almost within sight of each other, after having fought a great battle of Hindoo *ambition* against English *moderation*?

And how long since an enlightened Government, *par excellence*, broke the barrier of Chinese power, which has so long insulated a vast empire, and scattered dismay and death along its coasts, because its rulers had interdicted the sale of opium, a drug equally destructive to the moral faculties and to the physical powers of man? The Tartar passed the great wall, and planted his horse tails upon the towers of Pekin. He then became a Chinese, and the empire went on as before. But the Englishman, with his cannon-balls and his opium, has introduced an innovation into the habits and condition of one-third part of the human race, which may fatally affect its future prosperity.

And how long is it since an English army passed the gates of Asia, and, ascending the table-land of that continent, if it had not been annihilated by a series of disasters, which have few parallels in modern warfare, might have reversed the march of Alexander, and reached the Mediterranean by Nineveh, and Babylon, and Jerusalem?

And only five short years have elapsed since Christian cannon were heard in the mountains of Lebanon, and their bombs exploded among the broken monuments of Sidon.

In this brief view and review of pending and recent wars, I do not advert to the hostilities going on among some of the States of Spanish origin upon this continent, in Hayti, in Southern Africa, upon the frontiers of the colony at the Cape of Good Hope, in Madagascar, and in various islands of the Eastern ocean, because these are small wars, and some of them are waged by civilized nations against barbarous tribes, and hardly worthy of attention in these days of philanthropy—of that philanthropy which neglects objects of misery at home, whether in England or Ireland, the relief of which would be silent and unobtrusive, and seeks them everywhere else through the world, that they may be talked of and exhibited as proofs of benevolence—which, as an eminent French writer says, overlooks the wants of our neighbors, but goes to the north pole upon a crusade of charity! which has an innate horror at the very idea of black slavery, but looks calmly and philosophically, and with no bowels of

compassion, nor compunctions of remorse upon white slavery and brown slavery, amounting to millions upon millions in Russia, and in the English possessions in India and elsewhere, because, forsooth, this servitude is not in the United States, and neither cotton nor sugar will be affected by it.

These, and the Belgian war, and the Spanish war, and the Greek war, are events of but yesterday, yet sounding in our ears, and dwelling upon our tongues. And I might go on with these proofs and illustrations of the pugnacious disposition of the world, till your patience and mine were exhausted.

Why, sir, if England had a temple of Janus, as Rome had of old, it would be as seldom shut, as was that of her imperial prototype. The first fifteen years of this very century were nearly all passed in the greatest war known perhaps in the annals of mankind; and there are Senators in this body, and I among the number, who were born at the close of one war with England, and have lived through another, and who are perhaps destined to witness a third. And yet zealous but ill-judging men would try to induce us to cast by our armor, and lay open our country, because, forsooth, the age is too enlightened to tolerate war. I am afraid we are not as good as *these peace men, at all sacrifices, persuade themselves and attempt to persuade others.*

But, sir, to advert to another topic. I perceive—and I am happy to find it so—that there has been a nearer union of sentiment on one branch of this subject between the honorable Senator from Maryland and myself than I had supposed. All I regret is, that he had not avowed his opinion earlier in the session; for I should have felt myself greatly encouraged in my course by the identity of our views respecting the danger of the country. The honorable gentleman says: "We all have felt at one time, at least—I trust that that time has passed—the nation was in imminent danger of war." "From 'the moment the President of the United States deemed it 'right and becoming, in the very outset of his official career, 'to announce to the world, that the title of the United States 'to the northwest territory was clear and indisputable, down 'to the period of his Message in December, when he reiterated the assertion, I could not see how it was possible 'war was to be averted." "I could not but listen with dismay and alarm at what fell from the distinguished Senator 'from Michigan at an early period of this session."

Now, sir, I have not the slightest wish to misinterpret the sentiments of the Senator from Maryland; but I frankly confess I do not understand how, with the opinion he expresses, that war was unavoidable, any remarks of mine could have been thus characterized. I am well aware, indeed, that they came like a bomb-shell into a powder magazine. But why, I have yet to learn. Like the honorable Senator from Maryland, the moment I read the President's Message, I saw, to my own conviction at least, that our relations with England were in a critical situation; and that a regard to our duty, as representatives and sentinels of the people, required us to take measures of precaution, proportioned to the danger, whatever that might be. The President, with a due regard to his own responsibility, as well as to the just expectations of his countrymen, spread before us, not only his own views and recommendations, but the whole diplomatic correspondence, which had passed between the two Governments, on the subject of Oregon. Well, we all saw there was a dead halt in the march of the negotiations. The President told us, in effect, they were closed. I am not, sir, very tenacious as to the word. I do not attach that importance, in fact, to the condition itself, which the Senator from North Carolina appears to do. I am willing to call it closed, or terminated, or suspended, or, in the Executive phrase, "dropped." All I wish to show is, that nothing was going on. Why the honorable Senator from North Carolina dwelt with such earnestness upon this point, I do not comprehend, unless, indeed, he supposed, that if the negotiations were closed, they were closed forever, beyond the reach of the parties. If such were his views, I do not partake them. I trust no question of mere etiquette will keep the parties separated, if other circumstances should indicate they might be brought together. Such a course of action, or rather of inaction, would deserve the reprobation of the whole world. But however this may be, the President said, *that all attempts at compromise had failed.* These are his words. He invited us to give the notice, for the termination of the joint occupation of the country. He said it was all ours, and *that our title to it was maintained by irrefragable facts and arguments;* and he said, also, that at the end of the year, the temporary measures, which a regard to treaty stipulations allowed us only to adopt at this time, must be abandoned, and our jurisdiction over the whole country established and maintained. Such were, in effect, the views submitted to us by the Chief Magistrate of the nation, in the discharge of a solemn duty, committed to him by the Constitution.

One would think there were elements enough of trouble to engage the attention of the National Legislature, and to command its immediate action. If the ship of State were to be steered by the chart thus prepared by the pilot, either Great Britain must turn from her course, or we must meet her. There was no other alternative. She must gainsay much she had said. She must relinquish much she had claimed. She must concede much she had denied. She must do what a proud nation does with reluctance—retrace her steps in the face of the world, and lower herself in her own estimation. I did not say she would not do all this. I do not say so now. But looking to her history, to her position, and to the motives of human conduct—as these operate upon communities, as well as upon individuals—I had great difficulty in believing that she would do it, and I said so. And there was yet another element of uncertainty, combined with all these causes of embarrassment, and that was the doubt, if she came to the parallel of 49°, whether she would find our Government ready to come back to the same line. I know nothing of the intentions of either Government upon that subject. I cannot speak authoritatively, and therefore I do not undertake to speak at all. I know as little as any one in this room, be he actor or spectator in the scene that is passing. Whether the offer would be accepted, if repeated, or whether it would be repeated, if demanded. All I know is, that as the basis of an amicable adjustment, that time, which, while it mends some things mars others, is every day increasing the difficulty of its establishment; and that, as a means of terminating this controversy, I believe the question is rapidly passing from the control of the Government to the control of public opinion.

Under these circumstances, I introduced resolutions of inquiry into the necessity of adopting measures for the defence of the country, and, on the 15th of December, I advocated their adoption and explained my views, of which I have now troubled the Senate with a brief summary, and to which the honorable Senator says he listened with "dismay and alarm." "Dismay and alarm" at propositions for defence, when the gentleman himself says that "the nation was in imminent danger"! When "he could not see how it was possible war was to be avoided"? For it will be observed, they were subsequent circumstances, subsequent by some weeks, which removed this impression of the danger of war made by the President's Inaugural Address, and by his Message at the commencement of the session. They were the speeches of the Senators from Missouri and New York, and especially the speech recently delivered by the Senator from North Carolina. For myself I did not hear one word fall from the Senators from Missouri and New York, so far as I recollect, in which I did not fully concur. The former, besides the authority which long experience, high talents, and great services to his country and his party, give to all he says, here and elsewhere, understands this whole subject better perhaps than any man in the nation. And we all have borne our tribute of gratification to the able and statesmanlike exposition of the matter given by the Senator from New York. I did not understand either of these Senators, as alluding to the ulterior course of the President, or seeking to express any opinion respecting the result of this controversy. And I will ask the Senator from Maryland whether, upon a grave question like this, it is not safer and wiser to deduce the views of the President from two public and solemn documents, spreading before his country his opinions and foreshadowing his course, rather than from the construction given them by others, and resting upon what is called acts of *omission* and of *commission.*

It is not a little curious, but it is nevertheless true, that during the discussions brought out by my resolutions, gentlemen on the other side of the Senate took the opportunity of expressing their entire concurrence in the views and course of the President, and avowed their gratification at the Executive statements and recommendations. Though a condensed narrative of the negotiations accompanied the Message and formed the groundwork of the suggestions submitted to us, and though the correspondence was spread out in full before us. What is now thought upon this subject on the other side of the chamber, it needs not that I should tell. The views there expressed are as unequivocal as they are condemnatory. "We all have felt," says the Senator from Maryland, "that war was imminent," and still more emphatically, "I could not see how it was possible war was to be averted."

But I may be permitted to ask the honorable Senator, if war, in his opinion, was thus imminent, and not to be averted, how happened it that my remarks "filled him with alarm and dismay?" I thought there was danger of war, and so it appears did he. And his estimate of the danger was higher than mine; for I thought that among other means of avoiding it, instant and adequate preparations might exhibit such powers of offence and defence, and such a spirit

in the country, that England might pause before she would drive us to the last alternative of injured nations. And therefore was I so anxious for an immediate and decisive manifestation upon this subject. But we have all suffered these resolutions to sleep, as I remarked the other day, if not the sleep of death, a slumber almost as quiet; and though they were a little startled by the President's Message, still, before their full resuscitation into life, it may be necessary, that that same solemn warning should penetrate these marble Halls, which has said to other improvident nations, awake! the enemy is upon you. If, then, both the Senator and myself were apprehensive of war, and he thought it could not be averted, the "dismay and alarm" which my remarks occasioned, did not result from any difference of views upon that subject. And, as these remarks had but two objects—one to show the danger we were in, and the other to guard against it—it would seem to be the latter at which the honorable Senator took exception; and it is certainly a cause of mortification, that I managed my subject so awkwardly, as to convert my propositions for defence into a matter for "alarm and dismay."

Since then, however, sir, another note of warning has reached us from the eastern hemisphere, and we not only know that England is arming, but the sovereign herself has announced the fact in the most imposing manner, and has called upon Parliament to extend these armaments still further. And we now exhibit to the world the extraordinary spectacle of a nation in a state of perfect tranquillity—I might rather say of apathy, almost—without an army, without a militia—for our militia is unfortunately nearly disorganized—with unfinished and unfurnished defences, with an inadequate supply of the *materiel* of war, with a navy calculated only for a state of peace, with three thousand six hundred miles of seacoast on the Atlantic, and one thousand three hundred miles on the Pacific, and four thousand one hundred miles of interior frontier from Eastport to the line where 54° 40′ strikes the ocean, and two thousand four hundred miles of interior frontier from the southwestern corner of Oregon to the Rio del Norte—making a boundary of eleven thousand four hundred miles, agreeably to the calculation I have procured from the librarian, and penetrable in all directions. While, at the same time, we are involved in a great controversy with the most formidable nation—formidable in the means of injuring us—upon the face of the globe, which is buckling on its armor, and telling the world, through its sovereign, that it will maintain its interests and its honor—which, being translated into plain American, means that it will hold on to its claims.

Mr. President, a great deal has been said, both here and elsewhere, respecting the probability of war—whether it will result from the present condition of the two nations. Some gentlemen think this is a legitimate subject of inquiry, arising out of the principal question—that of the notice—directly before us; while others think we should decide the question on its own merits, leaving out of view the consequences, to which it may lead. Certainly, a question of territorial right should be judged and determined nakedly, and unembarrassed by other considerations. We owe that to our own honor. Still, it becomes prudent men, especially prudent statesmen, when taking an important step, to look to its results. Neither national nor individual acts are insulated—one measure leads to another. It seems to me it is not only our right, but our duty, as the Representatives of the States, to inquire where this measure will conduct us. If to a stable peace, so much the better. If to war, let us contemplate its prospects and its dangers, and let us prepare for its consequences. But, at any rate, let us commune together, and not blindly rush into the future, rather driven by our instincts, than guided by our reason.

Our first object is to preserve our rights; our next to do that peacefully. While we all hope that war will be averted, that hope will never be strengthened by underrating the capacity of either nation to defend itself, or to injure its opponent. For my own part, I see no want of patriotism in stating plainly and frankly the means of annoyance that England possesses; and I think the course of my honorable friend from Delaware upon that subject was equally patriotic and judicious. There is said to be a bird in the desert, which hides its head in the sand, and then thinks it is safe from danger, because it cannot see it. Let us not imitate this folly. Let us look directly at what we must encounter, if we are forced to war, and then let us behave like reasonable men, and make reasonable preparation to meet it.

I see it said in a late London Herald, that we cannot carry on war, because we cannot procure the means to meet the necessary expenditures. The same assertion has been made in some of our own journals, and even by higher authority. The Senator from South Carolina has referred in this connexion to a venerable man, for whom, and for whose patriotic services, I have great and sincere respect, who has awakened from a political slumber of almost a quarter of a century, and presents himself to his countrymen with elaborate statistical tables, showing the pecuniary cost of war, and the burdens it brings with it. All this is unnecessary. It is taught in the very horn-book of national expenditures. Ours is not a question of the cost of war, but of its necessity. That same eminent man, the survivor of the cabinets of Mr. Jefferson and of Mr. Madison, was understood, in 1812, to entertain a similar repugnance against committing the destinies of his country to war, which he now exhibits, and to foreshadow similar difficulties. I do not know if the fact be so. I can repeat only the rumors of that day. It was then asserted and believed, that some report or document from the Secretary of the Treasury was intended to dampen the national ardor, by an imposing array of the contributions it would be necessary to levy upon the country, in the event of war, and thus to prevent its occurrence. But the effort, if made, was useless then, and it will be useless now. The war went on, because it could not be avoided without a sacrifice of the national rights and honor, and it came to a glorious conclusion. It pushed us forward in all the elements of advancement. And as we did then so shall we do now. If a war is forced upon us, we shall meet it with its dangers and its responsibilities. No array of figures will stop the people in their patriotic course. You might as well attempt to stop the surges of the ocean beating upon the seacoast by marks in the sand, which the first wave sweeps away, and then passes on.

As to this notion, that a war cannot be maintained without cash enough in the possession of the Government to carry it on, or the means of procuring it at any time by loans, the two successful experiments we have made have demonstrated its fallacy. I do not stop to point out the peculiarities in our condition which prevent our national exertions from being paralyzed by deficient resources. They are to be found in the spirit and patriotism of our people; in the common interest they feel in a Government, established by them, and responsible to them; in the system of private credit, which almost makes part of our institutions, and which often separates by wide intervals the purchase and the payment; in the abundance and cheapness of the necessaries of life, and in the military ardor which stimulates our young men and sends them to the standard of their country. No modern Crœsus, be he a king of financiers, or a financier of kings, holds in his hands the action of this Government. But even in Europe, a decisive experiment has shown, that the exertions of a nation are not to be crippled by a crippled treasury. One of the great errors of Mr. Pitt arose from his belief, that as the French resources and credit were deranged and almost destroyed, therefore France was incapable of the necessary efforts to defend herself against the formidable coalition, at the head of which England placed herself, and to maintain which she poured out her blood as freely as her treasure. But the result proved the folly and the fallacy of all this, notwithstanding the depreciation of the French paper, and the difficulties consequent upon it. What was the progress and the result of this effort to prevent a people from changing and reorganizing their Government, is written upon the pages of a quarter of a century of war, and still more plainly upon the oppressed taxation of England; which now weighs upon her present condition like an incubus, and overshadows her future with dark clouds of adversity.

I now propose to submit some observations upon the remarks presented to the Senate a few days since, by the distinguished Senator from South Carolina. The originality of his views, and the force of the illustrations, with which they were supported, give them great consideration; and as it seems to me, that in some important particulars, their tendency is erroneous, I desire to communicate the impression they made upon me.

While I shall do this, with the freedom, which a sincere search after truth justifies, I shall do it with the respect that the eminent services and high character of the Senator justify, and that an uninterrupted friendship of thirty years, which has been to me a source of great gratification, naturally inspires.

The Senator states, that when this proposition for notice to terminate the joint occupancy of Oregon was first submitted for consideration, he was opposed to it. But that now he is in favor of it in some modified form; the form, I believe, it assumes in the resolution of the Senator from Georgia.

That his motives of action were the same in both cases—a desire to preserve the peace of the two countries; that in the former part of the session, he thought the notice would lead to war, and therefore he opposed it; that he thinks now it would lead to peace, and therefore he favors it.

Certainly, Mr. President, this is consistent ground for any

man to occupy. A change of action on questions of expediency, where circumstances have changed, is a dictate of true wisdom. He, who boasts he has never changed, boasts, in fact, that the lessons of experience have been lost upon him; and that he grows older without growing wiser. But before a change takes place in our approbation or condemnation of a great question of national policy, the reasons which dictate it should be carefully considered, and clearly established.

Has this been done by the Senator from South Carolina? I think not. He assumes the very fact, upon which his whole argument rests. He assumes that a great change has taken place both in this country and in England, in public opinion upon this subject, which will necessarily lead to a compromise, and thus to an amicable adjustment of this serious and long-pending controversy.

Of the fact itself, thus alleged, the Senator furnishes no proof. Indeed, he attempts to furnish none. He merely says: "There is one point, in which we must all be agreed, 'that a great change has taken place since the commence-'ment of this discussion in relation to notice, in its bearings 'upon the question of peace or war." "Public opinion has 'had time to develop itself, not only on this, but on the other 'side of the Atlantic, and that opinion has pronounced most 'audibly and clearly in favor of compromise."

"As things now stand, I no longer regard it as a question 'whether the controversy shall be pacifically arranged or not, 'nor even in what manner it shall be arranged. I regard the 'arrangement now simply a question of time," &c.

Mr. President, I cannot partake this confidence. The signs of the times are anything but auspicious to me. It will be perceived, that the annunciation thus certainly made of the peaceful termination of this matter, rests upon the change in public opinion and upon the conviction, that both Governments are ready to compromise, and both prepared to come to the same line; so much so, indeed, that the Senator adds, "he trusts that in concluding it there will be no unnecessary delay."

In all this, sir, I am under the impression, there is a great misapprehension. As to the *universality* of the proposition, *that all are agreed as to this change*, I know there is an error. For myself, my conviction is as strong as human conviction can be, not only that the change thus indicated has not taken place, but that a great change has been going on in a contrary direction. I believe that the opposition to a compromise upon the parallel of 49° has increased, is increasing, and will go on to increase; and that both here and in England, public opinion is less and less confident in an amicable settlement of this dispute. I shall not pursue this matter into its details. I will merely remark, that the evidences of public opinion, which reach us, whether borne here by letters, by newspapers, by the declarations of conventions, or by the resolutions of legislative bodies, is decisive and indisputable. And, in proof of this, look at the passage of the resolutions in the House of Representatives by a majority almost unknown in a free country upon a great question like this, and involving such momentous consequences; and this, too, when the Senator says, he thought their passage would lead to war. And what say the advices from England? They speak a language as positive, as it is minatory. What says the "Standard," of March 3, the great Tory organ? I will tell you: "But will the American Congress confirm the insolent and unwarrantable tone adopted by this *braggadocio*?" &c. And the person thus denominated by these models of all that is decorous, so often recommended to us for our study, is the President of this great Republic. "And dreadful as is the alternative, it will be with the utmost difficulty that any British Minister can escape from it with honor." The last London Times that I have seen says: "The joint navigation of the Columbia, the right of harbors 'on the sea-coast, and the right of traffic for the Hudson Bay 'Company on one bank of the river, are, we think, demands 'neither unjust nor extravagant." The London Gazette, of March 3, says: "*The news from the United States justifies 'the fears we have repeatedly expressed of the determined spirit 'of hostility which pervades a powerful party in the United 'States.*" The London Sun, a neutral paper, says: "The 'news from this country has produced a strong feeling of in-'dignation among our commercial circles; and those who 'have all along opposed the expediency of war, on account 'of mercantile connexions, now openly claim a vindication 'of the honor of the country at the hands of the Executive." "The feeling everywhere is, that England, having shown as 'much forbearance as is compatible with her station in the 'scale of nations, is now called upon to treat the proceedings 'of the American legislators with the contempt they de-'serve." The Liverpool Courier of March 4, says: "The 'consequences to which it may lead (the refusal to arbitrate) 'may be most calamitous. But the Americans will only 'have themselves to blame, if war ensues; for England has 'done all in her power to bring matters to a satisfactory and 'peaceful issue." Such are the evidences of public opinion in England, which the last packet brought us; and of the favorable change there, which renders a compromise certain, and a question only of time.

The honorable Senator has referred, in this connexion, to the declaration of Sir Robert Peel, made some time since in the British House of Commons, that he regretted their Minister had not transmitted to his Government the proposition of a compromise upon the parallel of 49°; that if not satisfactory, it might have been made the basis of a modified offer. I am not inclined to draw as favorable a conclusion, however, as the honorable Senator, from this incidental remark, made, not to us, but in the course of a Parliamentary discussion. In fact, it is so cautiously expressed, as to lead to no useful deduction respecting his real views. It is a mere barren remark. Had the Premier intended it should produce any practical consequences, he would have communicated to our Government the views of the British Cabinet, and would have accepted the offer, or returned it with the proposed modification. But we hear nothing of this disapprobation—no, not disapprobation, but of soft regret at the hasty decision of the British Minister here—till six months after it took place, and then we learn it in the public debates, and that is the last of it. It is to me a curious chapter in the history of British diplomacy, that a Minister would venture to take the grave responsibility of rejecting such a proposition, without referring it to his Government, and he is not even censured for it. If he had been recalled, or a successor sent out, with instructions to accept the propositions made by our Government for a compromise, we should then have had a proof of sincerity better than a barren declaration, and which might have led to a better state of feeling.

The Senator from South Carolina has entered at some length into a defence of his views respecting the acquisition of Oregon, by what is called the process of masterly inactivity. And if he has not made converts to his opinion, he has gained many admirers of his talents by his masterly vindication of it.

Certainly, sir, it is often the part of true wisdom in this world to stand still—to wait for time and circumstances. There is a great deal of wisdom in old proverbs, and one of them says, "*Let well enough alone.*" Time has wrought many wonders for our country, and is destined to work many more. The practical difficulty is, to determine when inaction should cease and action commence, and how the operations of time can be best aided by enterprise and industry. The honorable Senator says, that circumstances have got ahead of his system, and that he adverts to the subject, not to apply it, but to defend it. It seems to me, sir, it never could have produced the results the Senator anticipated, and produced them peacefully.

Here was an open question, which, for almost forty years, had occupied the attention of the two countries, which had been kept at arm's length by an improvident arrangement, instead of being grappled with and adjusted, as it could have been, and should have been, long ago, and which had at length increased to a fearful magnitude; and, what is still more, had begun to enlist passions, and feelings, and interests, that threatened to take the controversy from the pen, and to commit it to the sword. The claims of two great countries to a distant territory were unsettled, and in a condition unprecedented in the history of national intercourse. Each with a right to occupy the whole of the territory, but each liable to have this right defeated by the previous action of the other party—each holding a remote possession, beginning to fill up by emigration with their respective citizens and subjects, hardy, enterprising, and somewhat pugnacious, intermingled upon the same soil, seizing it as they could, and holding it as they might, without any of those improvements, which require for their creation and support the joint and legal action of a community, and wholly irresponsible for their acts towards one another, except through the medium of tribunals belonging to the party claiming allegiance over the aggressor, and possessing no sympathy with the complainant. The end of all this may be foreseen without the gift of second sight. Collisions must be inevitable. The only wonder is, they have not already occurred. And the first gun that is fired upon the Columbia will send its echoes to the Potomac and the Thames. And think you, that the matter will be coolly examined, dispassionately discussed, and amicably arranged? No, sir; each nation will believe its own story, and both will be ready to arm, and assert its honor, and defend its citizens. All history is full of these incidents; and the peace of two great nations is now held by the slightest tenure, dependent upon passions and interests to be called into fierce action upon the shores that look out upon China and Japan. We are

told that time is the great physician, who might have cured this disordered state of our political affairs. I am a firm believer in the silent and ceaseless operations of that mighty agent. But this case was beyond its power. If, indeed, time would stand still for one of the parties, and move only for the other—stand still for England, and move on for us—our state of progress would soon pour through the passes of the Rocky Mountains a host of emigrants who would spread over all the hills and valleys from the summit of that great barrier to that other barrier, the ocean itself, which says to the advancing settlements, Come no farther. But neither time nor England would stand still. Her Government is sagacious, alive to her interests, and ready to maintain them. She knows the value of the country as well as we do, and appreciates it perhaps higher. No one can read the speeches in the House of Commons on the 4th of April last, without being sensible, that the subject, in all its extent, has occupied the attention of the British Government, and that the country itself will occupy its fostering care. Think you that that Government would have continued to see band after band of our citizens leaving our frontier settlements, lost to human observation almost for months while passing through the desert with its toils, its privations, and its dangers, and finally emerging into the land of promise, to seize it, and to hold it, and would have looked calmly on, receding as we advanced, retreating to the hill as we descended into the valley, and finally yielding us quiet possession of this long-disputed territory? He, who does not believe all this, must believe that time would not have peacefully adjusted this controversy for us. But, besides, this process of adjustment does not assume that our right to exclude the British from the country will be increased by settlement. It may add strength to our power, but none to our title. It does not presuppose that war is to be averted, but only postponed. The rights of England, at the end of any given period, will be precisely what they now are; and, unless she should voluntarily relinquish them, a conflict would be inevitable. It seems to me very clear, that if she would ever be disposed to abandon the country, she would do it now, when the disparity of force there is not such as to cast the reproach of timidity upon her counsels, and when the number of her subjects is not such as to render difficult a satisfactory arrangement for them.

Mr. President, the Senator from South Carolina has held up to our view a sombre picture of the calamities, which a war with England would bring upon the United States—too sombre, sir, if I am not utterly ignorant of the history and condition of my country, and of the energy and spirit of my countrymen. I shall not examine it feature by feature; but there are certain portions I desire to present to the Senate.

What probable circumstances could require this country to keep up a military and naval force of two hundred thousand men for ten years—the land portion of it divided into seven great armies—I confess my utter inability to conjecture. Why the honorable Senator fixes upon that period for the duration of the war, I know not. It is so wholly conjectural as to elude the application of any principle to it. Long before its expiration, if we are not utterly unworthy of our name and our birthright, we should sweep the British Power from the continent of North America, and the remainder of the time must be occupied by predatory incursions upon the coast and by hostilities upon the ocean. The dangers or disasters, which this state of things brings with it, would require but a small portion of the force considered necessary by the Senator. As to Mexico, I trust we shall bear much from her. We owe that to our own strength and to her weakness; to our own position, not less than to the situation of her Government and to the *quasi* civil war, which seems to be the curse of her condition. But should we be driven to put forth our strength, peace would ensue, and speedily; but it would be a peace dictated in her capital, and placing her political destiny at our disposition.

And besides, during the progress of such a war, to which the honorable gentleman alludes, who can tell the sphere of its operations, and what nations would become parties to it? How soon would the great maritime questions of our day present themselves for solution? How long would it be before England would revive and enforce those belligerent pretensions, which drove us to war when we were neutral, and which would drive other nations to war occupying the same position? How long before the violation of her flag would arouse the public feeling of France, and compel her Government to vindicate its honor? And who can tell what war of principles and opinions would come to add its excitement and passions to the usual struggles of contending nations? The world is, indeed, in comparative repose; but there are causes in operation which, if quickened into action by peculiar circumstances, might shake the institutions of Europe to their very foundations. I consider a war between England and the United States for ten years, or for half of that time, utterly impossible, without bringing into collision the great questions of our day—the right to govern and the duty to submit—and into fierce action the interests and passions, which such a struggle would excite—a struggle that must come, but which such a war would accelerate.

In order, that I may remove even the possibility of misinterpreting the sentiments of the Senator, I will read an extract or two from his speech. After alluding to the material horrors of war, and doing justice to the courage of his countrymen, he adds, that a war between us and Great Britain, such as has been described, "in which every nerve and 'muscle would be strained to the utmost, and every dollar 'put in requisition which could be commanded, could not 'fail, under present circumstances, to work most disastrous, 'and I fear incurable changes in the social condition of our 'people, and in their political institutions." He then adverts to the consequences of such a war, drawing after it a Mexican war and an Indian war. He thinks we should need two fleets, six or seven armies, one hundred million of dollars annually, and a proportionate system of taxation. He then continues, after showing the destruction of the State governments, and the consolidation of all power in the central authority, and that our very success would engender a spirit inconsistent with the genius of our Government: "It would then be a straight and downward road, 'which leads to where so many free States have terminated 'their career—a military despotism. In the mean time we 'should have to provide for three or four successful gene-'rals, who would soon be competing for the Presidency, and 'before the generation, which would have waged the war 'would have passed away, they might possibly witness a 'contest between hostile generals for that supreme office—'a contest between him who might conquer Mexico and him 'who might conquer Canada, terminated by the sword."

But permit me to ask the Senator from South Carolina, if all this were so, if his anticipations were certain, instead of being purely gratuitous, ought the assurance of such events to come from him, from such a high authority, in so high a place? In the Senate of the United States, and from one who has filled some of the most important positions in our Government; whose services and talents, and character gave him great consideration with his countrymen; who possesses a European fame; and whose opinions are quoted at this moment in London and Paris as indications of our policy, and of the final result of this controversy? Is it well thus to announce to the world our incapacity to defend ourselves? For that is in fact the result. A Government dissolved, or rather changed to a despotism, a country ruined, and eventually its fragments a prey to ambitious generals, as the empire of Alexander was partitioned among his lieutenants! War, then, becomes not a measure of safety, but a signal of destruction to the American people. We are powerless to defend ourselves. If we are struck upon one cheek, we must turn the other; not in a spirit of Christian charity, but in the despair of helplessness. We are bound together by a fair-weather Government, incapable of riding out the storms of foreign aggression. Submission must be our refuge, for beyond submission is destruction. We shall exhibit the extraordinary spectacle of a great people, great in all the elements of power and prosperity, saying to the world, in effect, we cannot contend with England. We are at her mercy, for even success would ruin us.

Now, sir, this is not so. There is not one man within the sound of my voice whose heart does not tell him, *such has not been your past—such will not be your future.* The honorable Senator, in looking at the real calamities of war, which I seek neither to conceal nor to deny, has suffered himself to overrate them. They have struck him more forcibly than they should do. The experiment of two wars with England, into which we entered, and from which we issued gloriously, puts the stamp of error upon these sad forebodings. How they pushed us forward, in character and position among the nations of the earth, I need not tell; nor need I say, that the march of this country in all that constitutes the power and happiness of a people, is a practical proof, that those conflicts left no wounds upon our institutions, and but temporary checks upon our prosperity.

The honorable Senator has appealed to his past history in proof, that in presenting these views he acted in no unmanly fear for himself, and that if war comes, he would be among the last to flinch. No, Mr. President, no one in this nation doubts that his course would be firm and patriotic, should war be forced upon us. But he will permit me also to appeal; to appeal from the Senator of 1846 to the Representative of 1812. He is the *Ultimus Romanorum*—the last of the Romans: the sole survivor among us of a generation of statesmen, who have passed from the legislative service of their country. The last of the actors, not of the signers, who gave to the

would our second declaration of Independence, scarcely inferior in its causes and consequences to the first. He came here young, unknown to his country. He left these halls with a maturity of fame, which rarely falls to the lot of any statesman. I was then upon the frontier, and well do I remember with what straining eyes and beating hearts we turned towards the Capitol, to know if the honor and interests of our country would be asserted and maintained. There were then two men here, upon whom, more than upon any others, perhaps more than upon all others, devolved the task of advocating the war, and of carrying through the measures of the Administration. And nobly did they perform their duty. They were the honorable Senator from South Carolina, and a retired statesman, Mr. Clay, from whom, though it has been my fortune to differ in the party contests that divide us, yet it has always been my pride to do justice to his eminent qualities, and to his high services to his country, and especially to his services during our last contest with England. They were the leaders of that great legislative war, who, like the Homeric heroes, threw themselves into the middle of the fight, and fought the battles of their party and of their country, with equal talents, firmness, and success.

As to the evils of war, he of us is blind to all historical experience, who does not see them, and unfaithful to his position, who does not acknowledge them. There is no such representative of the States here. We *all* acknowledge the evils of war, both moral and material. We differ as to their degree, and as to the power of this country to endure and to inflict them. While the condition of England presents great means of annoyance, it presents also palpable elements of weakness. I am not her panegyrist. I shall never be accused of that. But if I see the defects of her national character, I can see also her redeeming virtues. I am sensibly alive to the acts of injustice she has done us. The feeling is deposited at my heart's core. But I do not shut my eyes, either to her power or to the virtues she actually possesses. I need not tell what she has done to attract the admiration of the world; for her deeds of war and peace are written upon many a bright page of human story. She has reached a commanding eminence among the powers of the earth—a giddy eminence; and I believe she will find it an unstable one. I do not, however, estimate her present position as high as many do, and I consider it as unsafe as almost any one can. The elements of her weakness lie upon the very surface of her affairs, open to the most careless observer. But she has great military and naval establishments, and she is augmenting and extending them. I am not going to spread before the Senate the statistics of her powers of annoyance and defence. This has been sufficiently done already. But I will express my decided conviction, that these tabular statements give an exaggerated picture of her condition. Old vessels, old guns, mere hulks, invalids, the relics of half a century of war, are arranged in formidable lists of figures, and go to swell the general aggregate.

Besides, she has peculiar drawbacks to the exertion of her power. The seeds of danger are sown in the most important province of her home empire, and may at any time start up into an abundant harvest of ruin and disaster. The dragon's teeth may become armed men.

She has possessions round the world to retain, and in many of them a discontented population to restrain. Her commerce, the very foundation of her prosperity and greatness, is scattered over all the bays, and inlets, and gulfs, and seas of the world; and he, who knows the daring character and enterprise of our people, knows that our public and private armed vessels would almost sweep it from existence. But I shall not pursue this investigation further. While I believe she will go to war with us, if she cannot escape from it without wholly sacrificing her own honor, as she views the question, I recollect she has done so twice before, with no credit to herself, but with imperishable glory for us.

A few words as to the condition of her finances, and her means of carrying on a war. It is said to be the last feather, that breaks the camel's back. That the time will come when the artificial and oppressive fiscal system of England must break down, and, like the strong man of Israel, involve her existing institutions in the fall, is as certain as any future political event can be. But that time has not yet come, and he must be a bolder or a wiser man than I am, to predict when it will come. She has the same means now to meet her war expenditures, which she has long had. The power of drawing upon the future for the exigencies of the present, leaving the generations to come to pay the debt, or to cast it off, like a burden too heavy to be borne. At this very moment she is making an experiment, which will be almost a revolution. A wise experiment, as I believe, but still a fearful one, for an old society, whose habits are fixed, and which accommodates itself with difficulty even to gradual changes.

As to the points of contrast between our condition and that of England, they are before the world; and for the purposes of peace or war, we need not fear the most searching examination.

Happen what may, we can neither be overrun nor conquered. England might as well attempt to blow up the rock of Gibraltar with a squib, as to attempt to subdue us. I suppose an Englishman even never thinks of that, and I do not know that I can exhibit in stronger terms its impossibility.

I might easily spread before the Senate our capacity to annoy a maritime adversary, and to sweep the British flag from this part of the continent; but I forbear. What we have twice done in the days of our comparative weakness, we can repeat and far exceed in these days of our strength. While, therefore, I do not conceal from myself, that a war with England would temporarily check our progress, and lead many evils in its train, still I have no fear of the issue, and have an abiding confidence, that we shall come out of it, not indeed unharmed, but with all the elements of our prosperity safe, and with many a glorious achievement written on the pages of our history.

It pains me, sir, to hear allusions to the destruction of this Government, and to the dissolution of this confederacy. It pains me, not because they inspire me with any fear, but because we ought to have one unpronounceable word, as the Jews had of old, and that word is *dissolution*. We should reject the feeling from our hearts and its name from our tongues. This cry of "*wo, wo*, to Jerusalem," grates harshly upon my ears. Our Jerusalem is neither beleaguered nor in danger. It is yet the city upon a hill, glorious in what it is, still more glorious, by the blessing of God, in what it is to be—a landmark, inviting the nations of the world, struggling upon the stormy ocean of political oppression, to follow us to a haven of safety and of rational liberty. No English Titus will enter our temple of freedom through a breach in the battlements, to bear thence the ark of our constitution and the book of our law, to take their stations in a triumphal procession in the streets of a modern Rome, as trophies of conquest and proofs of submission.

Many a raven has croaked in my day, but the augury has failed, and the Republic has marched onward. Many a crisis has presented itself to the imagination of our political Cassandras, but we have still increased in political prosperity as we have increased in years, and that, too, with an accelerated progress unknown to the history of the world. We have a class of men, whose eyes are always upon the future, overlooking the blessings around us, and forever apprehensive of some great political evil, which is to arrest our course somewhere or other on this side of the millenium. To them, we are the image of gold, and silver, and brass, and clay, contrariety in unity, which the first rude blow of misfortune is to strike from its pedestal.

For my own part, I consider this the strongest government on the face of the earth for good, and the weakest for evil. Strong, because supported by the public opinion of a people inferior to none of the communities of the earth in all that constitutes moral worth and useful knowledge, and who have breathed into their political system the breath of life; and who would destroy it, as they created it, if it were unworthy of them, or failed to fulfil their just expectations.

And weak for evil, from this very consideration, which would make its follies and its faults the signal of its overthrow. It is the only Government in existence which no revolution can subvert. It may be changed, but it provides for its own change, when the public will requires. Plots and insurrections, and the various struggles, by which an oppressed population manifests its sufferings and seeks the recovery of its rights, have no place here. We have nothing to fear but ourselves.

And the Senator from South Carolina will permit me to remark, that the apprehension he expresses, that a war may bring forward military chieftains, who would ultimately establish their own power upon the ruins of their country's freedom, is, in my opinion, if not the last of all the evils, one of the very last, which this Republic has to fear. I will not stop to point out the circumstances of our position, character, and institutions, which render a military despotism impossible in this country. They are written in burning characters, not upon the wall, but upon the heart of every American; and they need no seer to expound them. Our safety is our union; our only fear, disunion. In the moral government of the world, national offences are punished by national calamities. It may be that we may forsake the God of our fathers, and seek after strange gods. If we do, and are struck with judicial blindness, we shall but add another to the long list of nations unworthy of the blessings acquired for them by preceding generations, and incapable of maintaining them;—but none as signally so as we.